

Letter from William Wade to Alexander Graham Bell, October 31, 1899

Oakmont Pa Oct 31 1899 Dear Dr Bell

Your's received. I really fear that Mr Hitz does not at all comprehend the surroundings Helen now has, and the flood of falsehood let loose over her examinations; I learn that Mr. Hitz does not accept the statement that Helen knew American Braille before she did English, on account of think Helen has said she did not know American braille and he has a complete trust in Helen's truthfulness; Nobody living will outdo me in trust in Helen's purity and truth, but things said about Helen are not her sayings, and I am convinced that letters never written by her have appeared in print with her name over them. That wretched mass of rot that appeared in The Transcript has started the nonsense about Helen, and how any intelligent man could write of Helen passing examinations when the questions were written in a print unknown to her, passes my understanding; How could she answer questions without knowing what the questions were? How could she know what they were if she was unaquainted with the print they were written in? The fact is that Helen knew American braille so thoroughly, a year before she saw English braille, as to write that long story "The Frost King" in it, and I have demonstrated this, in a note that will appear in next Annals, by Miss Sullivan's letter addressed to Mr Hitz published in The Helen Keller Souvenir, and Helen's letter published for years annually in the Reports of The British & Foreign Blind Association. In that letter in The N Y World, she is made to say that she did not know the algebraic signs in American braille, yet I regret to say that they are in existence, in her own writing, over two years since; Now as I know that Helen cannot be brought to utter a conscious falsehood, no 2 matter how much be-fooled and hoodwinked she may be, it is quite clear to me that she never wrote that letter that appeared in The World, in it's present form

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Our excellent friend, Mr Booth, is as careful as most men, and he let that mass of nonsense, originated in The Transcript , fool him and , has published it in The Speech Association's Review; Neither Mr Hitz nor M Mr Booth pay attention to matters strictly within the province of the blind, and they are likely to make just such mistakes as these! I would suggest a reference of anything published about Helen's exams, to some such man as Mr Edw E Allen of the Phila blind school, who knows H Helen thoroughly and is one of her most sincere frei friends, for most certainly such ridiculous exaggerations as are going around, must be damaging to Helen; They make her seem ridiculous with those posted about blind reading, and make other deaf-blind children look like fools in comparison with those who are not posted. I certainly think the positions taken by The Silent Hoosier and The Kentucky Standard, are very just and wise; Helen's passing at all, with only the last two years under a coach, who only gave her two hours a week for nearly half the time, is wonderful enough, without a lot of utter bosh piled on

Your's Truly NWade